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The word “*But*” in Iranian

By H. W. BAILEY

I

AN important passage which has often¹ been treated, but not so far satisfactorily, is found on page 186 of the Iranian text of the Bundahišn,² lines 11-12,

וְאֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

that is, *but dēv ān kē-š pat Hindūkān paristēnd api-š vaχš pat ān butihā mēhmān < i > čēgōn bōdāšaf paristēt*: “the demon But is that which they worship in India and in his images a spirit is resident which is worshipped as Bōdāšaf.”

II

Three of these words demand consideration.

1. *bvt But*. With the discovery of Sogdian texts the history of the Indian word Buddha outside India was happily made clear, as Gauthiot had already recognized in *Journal Asiatique*, 1911, juillet-août, p. 55 *seq.* The Sogdian form of the name *pwty* "Buddha" occurs *passim* in the Buddhist texts, beside the adjectival *pw'n'k* (= *butānak*) "of Buddha". In Sogdian Indo-Iranian voiced consonants *bdg* had initially become spirants $\beta\delta\gamma$, which required the use of *ptk* for foreign words containing *bdg*. Hence the spelling *pwty* = *But*-. This is the identical form which is found in New Persian *but* بـت, in the sense of "idol". But the meaning of "Buddha" is still clear in many passages of New Persian. Thus we read in Juvainī³: *va dar xitāi but-parastī būda ast va rasūlī nazdīk i < ū > xān firistāda*

¹ Cf. West, *SBE.* v, 111; Darmesteter, *SBE.* iv, liii; Gray, *Foundations of Iranian Religions*, p. 203.

² Ed. Anklesaria, Bombay, 1908.

³ See Salemann apud Radloff, *Kudatku Bilik*, vol. i, introd., and Marquart, *SBAW.*, 1912, 486 *seq.*

ast va tōyinān rā χvāsta, “In Khitai (Northern China) there was Buddha-worship, and the Khan sent an envoy to him (the Chinese Emperor), and asked for Toyins (Buddhist priests,—an Uigur and Mongolian word)”. In Uigur occurs *pvt*, **but* rather than **bud*.¹ In Pahlavi the word *bvt*² in the sense of “image” was recognized by all; it was doubted that *bvt* also meant “Buddha”, since the intermediate forms were missing.³

The Sogdian word *pwtv* is a transcription⁴ from an Indian dialect. But the word “Buddha” reached Central Asia also in another form from China. The pronunciation of Chinese 佛 about the eighth century is given by the Tibetan spelling *hbur*, cf. *JRAS.*, 1927, p. 296. The *-r* represents the final Chinese consonant developed from final *-t*. Sogdian has this word in a compound *pwrsk* **bursang* “Buddha-sangha”.⁵ From Sogdian the word passed to Uigur *bursang*, and in the like form to Mongolian. The first part of Uigur (and, as a loan-word, Mongolian) *burχan* may be this same *bur-* “Buddha” (cf. Mironov, *Kuchean Studies*, p. 74). Then Uigur *tāngri burχan* is “the divine Khan Buddha”, but this meaning was not always fully recognized, so that in Manichæan Uigur texts *burχan zrušč* is “the Burχan Zoroaster”. Japanese, on the other hand, borrowed the word with *-t*, *Butu* (*Butsu*).

2. *vχš*.⁶ A considerable semantic development lies behind this word. In the Turfan manuscripts in Middle Iranian (MPT.) *v'χš* **vāχš*⁷ occurs often in a sense which can be roughly rendered by “spirit”. Both the singular *v'χš* and the plural *v'χš'n* are found:—

'yg pyd'g bvd v'χš 'y hvr's'n vymnd⁸
aiγ paidāy būd vāχš ē hvarāsān vīmand

“Then appeared the Spirit of the Land of Khorasan.”

¹ F. W. K. Müller, *Uigurica* [I], p. 11.

² In Pahlavi *v* (vāv) is used as a *mater lectionis* for *ū* as well as *ū* and *ō*: *dvr* = *dūr* “far”, *gvš* = *gōš* “ear”, *knšn* = *kūnišn* “deed”.


³ For “Buddha” on a Sassanian coin see Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, p. 45, corrected *Arch. Mitt.*, i, 136, note 2.

⁴ For Sanskrit in Sogdian transcription see Gauthiot, *JA.*, 1911, jan.-févr. p. 94.

⁵ See Rosenberg, *Bull. Acad. Sc. USSR.*, 1927, p. 1394.

⁶ This has always been the crux of this passage.

⁷ For the alef compare MPT. *'ry'm'n* beside *'ry'mn* “Aryāmān”, a loan-word from Avestan *airyaman-*, nom. sg. *airyama*, *airyāmā*.

⁸ *vymnd* Pahl.  is probably **vī-mantu-* to *man-* “dwell, remain”, cf. NPers. *nīzand* “formidable; cast down”, **nī-řantu-* to *gan-* “strike”, MPT. *znd-*, Av. *zantu-* “tribe” in MPT. *zndbyd*, Av. *zantupaiti-* to *zan-* “be born”.

frystg'nt p'y'nd v'χš'nt r'myn'nd
frēstāyān-ot pāyānd vāχšān-ot rāmēnānd

"May the *Frēstāys* (ἄγγελοι or ἀπόστολοι) protect thee, may the *vāχšs* give thee joy."

But in Sogdian, as Lentz has shown,¹ Christ. Sogd. *v'χš*, Manich. Sogd. *v'h[š]* correspond to MPT. *sxvn* in the sense of λόγος.² It is therefore clear that we have here to do with a technical word from the Avestan (nom. sing.) *vāχš* and *vāχš*³ "a spoken word", which is the meaning also of Sogd. (Buddh.) *w'γš*. For this use of the nom. sing. we have a parallel in MPT. *drvχš* **druχš* "evil one", Av. (nom. sing.) *druχš*. The Pahlavi has *drvč* **druž*.

In Zoroastrian writings the word *vaχš* "spirit" is found in the Škand-gumānik Vičār, a Pāzand text.

In chapter xiii, 7, *vaχš* corresponds to the Hebrew דין in a paraphrase of the beginning of Genesis :—

u vaχš i Yazad aβar rōd i α āβ i syāh hamē nyāβeδ.

"And the spirit of God ever had desire upon the face of that black water."

In chapter xiv, 12, quoting also from Jewish Scripture, Is. 30, 28,

u huzvα čun ātaš i sōžā

u vaχš čun rōd i arōvīnā

"And his tongue like burning fire

And his spirit like a rushing river."

The word is found also in another passage of the Iran. Bund. in the "Chapter of Opposites", p. 48, l. 14–15: *apārīk dēvīk vaχš ō yazdīk vaχš čēgōn dēvān družān *yātūkān māzanīkān ō yazd bayān amahraspandān* "and the other dēvian spirits are opposed to the yazdian spirits, as dēvs, družs, sorcerers, Mazanian demons to yazds, bayys (gods), and Amahraspands."

The word *vaχš* is, therefore, assured for Pahlavi, beside the MPT. passages.⁴

3. *bvt'sp*. In this we have clearly to recognize another word received by Pahlavi through Sogdian from India. It is the Sanskrit *Bodhisattva*. The usual Sogdian form in Buddhist texts is the exact transcription of the Sanskrit word, *pwtystβ* **Bodisatβ*^a, but a

¹ "Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus," p. 85, *ABAW.*, 1926.

² Cf. Pahl. *vχ'vr* **vaχ'avar* "prophet" = **vaχ'a-bara-*.

³ Bartholomae, *AIW.*, 1334–5.

⁴ See Salemann, *Manichäische Studien*, s.v. 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥.

developed form is found in the “Sūtra of Causes and Effects”¹ *pwtyśβ* **Bodisaβ*, l. 284; *pwtsβ* **bod(i)saβ*, l. 555. The word passed hence to Uigur, which has *pwtystβ* **Bodisatβ* in Buddhist texts,² but *pwtyśβ* **Bodisaβ* or **Bodisaf* in Manichæan texts.³ From Uigur it passed to Mongolian *pwtystβ*, which became by wrong reading *bodisung* and *bodisug*. In the Chinese the word became 菩薩 (modern *p’u sah*), which the Japanese read as *Bosatu* (*Bosatsu*) and the Uigurs as *pvs’r* **bosar*.

Here, then, we have the source of Pahlavi *bvt’sp* in Manichæan texts. But it is equally the source of the Arabic بداسف *budāsaf*, and of the *Ioasaph* of the Western form of the legend of “Barlaam and Joasaph”.⁴

It is certain, therefore, that the word “Bodhisattva” had reached Persia, independently of this Bundahišn passage. Probably the Arabic form with medial alif *budāsaf* is due to the Pahlavi which also has alef: *bvt’sp* *Bōdāsaf*.

III

But it is clear from the context, which is an enumeration of the names of *dēvs*, mostly with Avestan names, that the *bvt* of this Bundahišn passage is intended to represent the *Būiti* of the Avesta. Here *Būiti* occurs three times,⁵ each time as nom. sing. in this form *Būiti*, which indicates either an insufficient understanding of an inflected language, or perhaps more probably a foreign word. It is important to remember that the Avestan alphabet is derived from an Aramaic alphabet, in which, as in Pahlavi, the three letters, alef, vāv, and yod, served as *Matres lectionis*: Avestan 𐬱 (*u*) and 𐬵 (*ū*) are representatives of vāv. Geldner⁶ noticed that the manuscripts were undecided in the use of 𐬱 and 𐬵. The result is that, in Avestan texts, transcribed *u* and *ū* may both stand for original Indo-Iranian *u* or *ū*; cf. *ūna-* and *una-*. Graphically 𐬵𐬱𐬵 may correspond to an etymological

¹ Ed. Gauthiot and Pelliot, *Le Sūtra des causes et des effets*, 1926.

² F. W. K. Müller, *Uigurica* [I], p. 17 et *passim*.

³ Von Le Coq, “Ein christl. u. ein manich. MSfragment,” *ABAW.*, 1909, p. 1202 *seq.*

⁴ Von Le Coq, loc. cit. Cf. Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi*, p. 206.

⁵ Vidēvdāt, 19, 1, 2, 43.

⁶ K. Geldner, *Avesta*, Prolegomena L, col. 2.

**buti-* or **būti*. Decision in such cases can only be obtained from New Iranian dialects ¹ (or Middle Iranian in the early Arabic writers) in comparison with Sanskrit. Here the NPers. *but* is decisive for **Buti*, which is identical with Sogdian *puty*.² This conclusion agrees with the date of the Vidēvdāt passages, which, as Herzfeld³ has shown, is about the middle of the second century B.C. In substance Darmesteter⁴ was right, though his details can now be corrected, in recognizing "Buddha" here.

¹ Sakan (in a fully vocalized Indian alphabet) does not help in this particular case, since Buddha and Bodhisattva are simply transcribed from Sanskrit.

² The final *-i* of the Avestan *Būiti* probably betrays its Eastern Iranian origin.

³ *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, i, 79, note 1; 136, note 2.

⁴ *Zend-Avesta* (1893), 3, xlviii, cf. 2, 259.